



SOUTH SIDE THEATRE ACADEMY

Experience the Stage

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Updated: 7th September 2023

Please note that all staff and volunteers must read and sign this document before the start of their employment.

South Side Theatre Academy values young people and children as being a vital part of the organisation and desires to see them grow, mature and be challenged in a healthy and safe environment.

Toby Ward-Smith & Bethany Pease is the designated Child Protection Officer for the group. And a copy of this anti-bullying policy will be kept with the group leader at all classes, workshops, and rehearsals.

South Side Theatre Academy has a zero-tolerance policy on bullying in any class, project or rehearsal.

This policy should be reviewed and updated annually.

Organisation

- Recognise its duty of care and responsibility to safeguard all participants from harm.
- Promote and implement this anti-bullying policy.
- Seek to ensure that bullying behaviour is not accepted or condoned.
- Require all members of **South Side Theatre Academy** to be given information about and read and sign this policy.
- Take action to investigate and respond to any alleged incidents of bullying.
- Encourage and facilitate children and young people to play an active part in developing and adopting a code of conduct to address bullying.
- Ensure that coaches are given access to information, guidance and/or training on bullying.

Each participant, staff member or volunteer will

- Respect every child's need for, and rights to, a play environment where safety, security, praise, recognition, and opportunity for taking responsibility are available.
- Respect the feelings and views of others.
- Recognise that everyone is important and that our differences make each of us special and should be valued.
- Show appreciation of others by acknowledging individual qualities, contributions, and progress.
- Be committed to the early identification of bullying, and prompt and collective action to deal with it.
- Ensure safety by having rules and practices carefully explained and displayed for all to see.

- Report incidents of bullying they see – by doing nothing you are condoning bullying.

Bullying

- All forms of bullying will be addressed.
- Everybody at **South Side Theatre Academy** has a responsibility to work together to stop bullying.
- Bullying can include online as well as offline behaviour.
- Bullying can include:
 - physical pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching etc.
 - name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing and emotional torment through ridicule, humiliation or the continual ignoring of individuals.
 - posting of derogatory or abusive comments, videos, or images on social network sites.
 - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures, sectarianism.
 - sexual comments, suggestions, or behaviour.
 - unwanted physical contact.
- Children with a disability, from ethnic minorities, young people who are gay or lesbian, or those with learning difficulties are more vulnerable to this form of abuse and are more likely to be targeted.

Signs and symptoms of bullying for tutors and parents.

A change in student's behaviour may suggest that they are being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to do things they would usually do
- stops attending or wanting to attend class
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- seems low in mood
- spends free time in class on their own
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- continual complaints of feeling ill in the morning
- begins to make less effort than previously
- has possessions which are damaged or "go missing"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- has changes in appetite
- is frightened to say what's wrong

These signs and behaviours could indicate other social, emotional and/or mental health problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility, be investigated and the young person offered support.

Support to the child

- Children should know who will listen to and support them.
- Systems should be established to open the door to children wishing to talk about bullying or any other issue that affects them.
- Potential barriers to talking (including those associated with a child's disability or impairment) need to be identified and addressed at the outset to enable children to approach adults for help.
- Children should have access to Helpline numbers.
- Anyone who reports an incident of bullying will be listened to carefully and be supported.
- Any reported incident of bullying will be investigated objectively and will involve listening carefully to all those involved.
- Children being bullied will be supported and assistance given to uphold their right to play and live in a safe environment which allows their healthy development.
- Those who bully will be supported and encouraged to stop bullying.
- Sanctions for those bullying others that involve long periods of isolation, or which diminish and make individuals look or feel foolish in front of others, will be avoided.

Support to the parents/guardians

- Parents/guardians should be advised on **South Side Theatre Academy's** Anti-Bullying policy and practice.
- Any incident of bullying will be discussed with the child's parent(s)/guardians
- Parents will be consulted on action to be taken (for both victim and bully) and agreements made as to what action should be taken
- Information and advice on coping with bullying will be made available
- Support should be offered to the parent(s) including information on other agencies or support lines.

Reporting Concerns

- If you are concerned about bullying in a class or project then speak to your class lead immediately.

- All known/reported incidences of bullying will be investigated by the class tutors or by the Artistic Director.
- If so, Class Lead to speak to students involved.
- If further action is required, Class Lead to contact the Artistic Director to speak to parents. Alternatively, Class Lead may want to speak to parents at pick-up.
- Parents of the student who is showing bullying behaviour will be spoken to about the incident and about any concerns that they may be having, and request that the parents support South Side with resolving the situation.
- Keep note of all disclosures or altercations witnessed. Include date and times. Ensure any words used by students are written in their own words.
- The child display will be asked to apologise. Wherever possible, the students will be reconciled. The student is given an opportunity, if they wish, to meet with the bully face to face in a safe and supervised setting and talk through the impact that the bullying has had, or is having, on them. This is a good opportunity for both parties to gain an understanding of how their behaviour affects others.
- In serious cases where a student shows no change in behaviour and an unwillingness to alter their behaviour or choices, South Side will have no alternative but to remove the student from South Side's Registry.

Prevention

- At South Side, we use a variety of methods to support children in preventing and understanding the consequences of bullying; including promoting teamwork, fair play and a supportive network within the student's peer groups.
- South Side tutors actively encourage children to have respect for each other. Our ethos has always been to guide and encourage our students, allowing them to express and develop their personality, skills, and confidence within a great atmosphere, as this is something we always strive to achieve. Kind and polite behaviour is regularly acknowledged and encouraged. Staff will reinforce expectations of behaviour as a regular theme in line with what they are learning in class. Tutors and Chaperones are vigilant regarding groups of friends together.
- Friendship groups are important for young people's social development, and whilst friendship is encouraged, they must also be supported towards welcoming others to join them, and not excluding others from their group.
- Staff reinforce a general message that children do not have to be best friends with everyone else, but they must be respectful of everyone else's feelings and be kind to each other.
- Older students are involved with the prevention of bullying and are encouraged to take on a supportive role to look out for the younger students and to set an example of how to behave both in class and with their peers. Students are also encouraged to have an open dialogue with tutors as this leads to an increased likelihood of a young person talking to a tutor with any concerns they may have.

Useful contacts

- NSPCC Helpline **0808 800 5000**
- CPSU (Child Protection in Sport Unit) **www.thecpsu.org.uk**
- ChildLine **0800 1111 / www.childline.org.uk**
- Kidscape **www.kidscape.org.uk**
- Anti-Bullying Alliance **www.antibullyingalliance.org**
- BEF Safeguarding Officer **02476 698871**

This policy was originally adopted by the **South Side Theatre Academy** on 11/05/2018 and reviewed on 07/09/2023.

Signed on behalf of the Management Team by:

Signature..... *T. Ward-Smith*

Name in Capitals.....TOBY WARD-SMITH.....

The policy has been reviewed by the Management Team on:

Date.....07/09/2023.....